

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 THE HA 00754 140617Z

43

ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-02 AID-05 IGA-01 MC-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 /070 W

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R 131608Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5234

SECDEF WASHDC

OSAF/INL

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AFB

AFSC ANDREWS AFB

ASD WPAFB OH/CC/OI/YP

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 0754

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: F-104 REPLACEMENT: PIETER DANKERT'S VIEWS

REF: THE HAGUE 725

1. SUMMARY: IN BRIEF TALK FEBRUARY 13 PRIOR TO RESUMPTION OF SECOND CHAMBER DEBATE ON GON DEFENSE BUDGET, LABOR PARTY DEFENSE SPOKESMAN PIETER DANKERT (WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF THE SECOND CHAMBER FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE) INDICATED THAT HIS TWO BASIC REASONS FOR ADVOCATING A LESS EXPENSIVE REPLACEMENT FOR THE STAR-FIGHTERS THAN THE F-16 WER CONNECTED WITH COST AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS. HE SAID HE MIGHT BE PERUADED TO A DIFFERENT VIEW POINT IF VREDELING MADE A REALLY STRONG CASE. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 THE HA 00754 140617Z

2. SPECIFICALLY, DANKERT IS CONCERNED THAT THE 2.3 BILLION GUILDERS (IN TERMS OF 1974 GUILDERS) ALLOCATED IN THE DEFENSE WHITEPAPER FOR THE F-104 REPLACEMENT PROGRAM WILL NOT PROVE ADEQUATE TO PURCHASE THE F-16. HE ANTICIPATES THE NEED TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS "SMART BOMBS", NOT INCLUDED IN THE "FLY-AWAY" PRICE GIVEN TO THE CONSORTIUM. HE ALSO ANTICIPATES THAT INFLATION AND EXCHANGE RATE VARIATIONS WILL EFFECTIVELY REDUCE THE 2.3 BILLION AVAILABLE. HE CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDES THE POSSIBILITY THAT HIS PARTY WOULD VOTE A SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION UNLESS NATO WERE CLEARLY MOVING INTO A HOSTILITIES SITUATION.

3. DANKERT BELIEVES THAT IT WILL ALSO PROVE NECESSARY TO FIND SOME ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE NETHERLANDS GROUND FORCES TO MAINTAIN THEM AT PROJECTED QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE LEVELS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE WHITE PAPER. HE WOULD, THEREFORE, LIKE TO HOLD BACK SOME OF THE 2.3 BILLION GUILDERS AS A RESERVE AGAINST THIS CONTINGENCY. HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE NETHERLANDS WOULD HAVE TO START A REPLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR ITS 100-PLUS NF-55 PRIOR TO THE SECOND PERIOD COVERED BY THE WHITE PAPER (1979-83). HE SAID THERE IS NO MONEY ALLOCATED FOR THIS PURPOSE IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WHITE PAPER AND THIS WORRIES HIM.

4. AS TO STRATEGY, DANKERT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE F-5E DOES NOT POSSESS THE LIMITED AIR SUPERIORITY CALLED FOR IN CURRENT NATO DEFENSE PLANNING. HIS ANSWER TO THAT IS THAT AMERICAN-DEPLOYED F-16S OR GERMAN MCRAS FIGHTING IN COMBINATION WITH THE F-5ES COULD PROVIDE THE REQUISITE AIR SUPERIORITY. IN A GENERAL WAY HE BELIEVES THAT NATO PLANNING IS IN A STATE OF FLUX AS NEW CONCEPTS AND NEW MATERIEL COME INTO PLAY. HE THEREFORE SEES NO INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS SELECTING THE F-5E AND FILLING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR AIR DEFENSE IN THE CENTRAL SECTOR.

5. DANKERT CLOSED BY RE-EMPHASIZING THE VEHEMENT OPPOSITION OF THE LABOR PARTY TO ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE DEFENSE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 THE HA 00754 140617Z

BUDGET DURING THE LIFE OF THE DEN UYL GOVERNMENT. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION HE SAID THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT A MAJORITY OF THE LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, IF PUSHED, HARD, MIGHT BE MUSTERED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE MORE EXPENSIVE HIGH-PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE CONSORTIUM. HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT SUCH A DECISION WOULD PROVOKE A STRONGLY ADVERSE REACTION IN THE RANKS OF THE LABOR PARTY OUTSIDE OF PARLIAMENT. THIS

KIND OF CONFRONTATION WAS TO BE AVOIDED IF HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

6. DCM REPLIED TO THE EFFECT THAT DANKERT'S PROPOSAL TO PURCHASE THE F-5E, WHILE IT MIGHT AVERT THE POTENTIAL BUDGETARY PROBLEMS DANKERT FORESAW, WOULD CREATE AN EVEN MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM, NAMELY THAT THE NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE WOULD BE EQUIPPING ITSELF WITH AN AIRCRAFT INCAPABLE OF FULL DISCHARGING THE NATO MISSION ASSIGNED TO IT. DCM SUGGESTED THAT DANKERT RETHINK THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE OF THE SELECTION OF AN AIRCRAFT THAT WAS NOT DESIGNED FOR THE KIND OF HOSTILE AIR ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH ALLIED AIR FORCES WOULD SURELY HAVE TO FIGHT IN THE 1980'S. DCM ADDED HE FORESAW SERIOUS REPRRCUSSIONS IN US CONGRESS FROM THE FAILURE OF A CLOSE AND TRUSTED ALLY SUCH AS THE NETHERLANDS TO PURCHASE THE F-16 IN THE FACE OF A UNAIMOUS FINDING OF THE CONSORTIUM STERING COMMITTEE THAT THE F-16 PROPOSAL WAS SUPERIOR IN EVERY MAJOR RESPECT. DANKERT LISTENED CAREFULLY, SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE US CONGRESSIONAL ANGLE, AND ADDED THAT HIS PRESENT POSITIONIN FAVOR OF A REPLACEMENT OF THE F-5E OR JAGUAR CLASS WASOPEN TO CHANGE IF DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING MADE A REALLY STRONG CASE.

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